Interview with George F. Bogardus

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GEORGE F. BOGARDUS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is the tenth of April 1996. This is an interview with George G. Bogardus. It's being done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Can we start at the beginning? Could you tell me a bit about where and when you were born and something about your family?

BOGARDUS: I was born in Des Moines, Iowa on June 6, 1917. Both my parents came from Springfield, Illinois and they are now buried in a plot which is adjacent to Lincoln's cenotaph in Springfield, Illinois.

Q: What was your father?

BOGARDUS: My father was the youngest of five brothers and they all went to the University of Illinois, but Dad's father died when he was a freshman at the University of Illinois, so he never was able to graduate. All the time I knew him, he was selling heating plants in Iowa and Nebraska for large buildings. Fortunately, a lot of schools were being put up there at that time. I grew up in Des Moines and went to Plymouth Congregational Church, which was only three blocks away. I was baptized and taught there. I went to public school at Greenwood Elementary, which was only three blocks from Henry Agard Wallace's home, that is, and then later to Theodore Roosevelt High. At age 12, in 1929,

Dad got a big promotion to be the manager for the same company, Kewanes Boiler Company, for all of Ohio, with headquarters in Cleveland. So, I lived there all during my junior high days in Shaker Heights, which is a very fine area. Then, the depression really took hold there, especially in the heavy industry area of Ohio and Michigan. Exactly three years later, we went back to Des Moines. That was the end of Dad's career. My mother had been elected president of the Des Moines Women's Club, which was 1,000 ladies strong, in 1929, and had to give that up, most sadly for us all.

Q: So, where did you go to high school?

BOGARDUS: Shaker Heights High for a year and a half and then two and a half years at Roosevelt High. I graduated there and won a scholarship to Harvard in the spring. I graduated in January of '35 and I won a scholarship both to Chicago and Harvard and chose Harvard. That was a full scholarship: $400 a year.

Q: When you were at Harvard, what was your particular area of interest?

BOGARDUS: I gravitated rather quickly to political science. They called it “gov” then (government) the classical theorists, and languages. I already had French and some Latin, and I went into German as well, American history, European history, constitutional law.

Q: So, I assume you were there from about '35 to '39?

BOGARDUS: That's right. I graduated in '39.

Q: Tell me, what was the impression that you were getting from Harvard of events in Europe?

BOGARDUS: Well, we were very much into that. I became a member of the Harvard Student Union and stayed with it for two years through 1938, through debates on Fascism and the Ethiopian War, Spanish Civil War, Hitlerism, anti-Semitism and the Munich Pact, but became disgusted because it became quite clear that, as an affiliate of the American

Student Union, covert communists among us were directing things. I remember going to a rally on North Station for Earl Browder with a movie, Lenin at Finalnd Station. Lo and behold, who was collecting money? Two or three of our classmates. Larry Levy was one of them. I knew him very well. He was from the same house, Leverett House. He finally admitted to me that he was head of the Young Communist League for Boston and received the Party “line” weekly. Later on, Bill Kirstein, a friend of mine who was a year older and Jewish like Larry, said that Larry had continued as a supporter of Stalin through 1941.

Q: So, you were taking this government course. What did this produce for you when you got out? I mean, where did you go in 1939?

BOGARDUS: Maybe we'd better stop for a minute. In '38, I made a trip by cattle boat to England and then carried on with youth hosteling across England into France and as far east as Munich. I climbed the Zugspitze, which is the highest peak in Germany, on the Austrian border, and came back.

Q: What was your impression of Europe? It was really on the eve of the war?

BOGARDUS: Oh, yes, things were quite tense and getting tenser. One of my Harvard connections, my Harvard professor of German, gave me an address of a woman to stay with in Munich. I arrived a day late there (they were unhappy). The name was von Oheim and Frau von Oheim, having been educated for at least two years in Britain, spoke very good English. It turned out later after the war , she was a leading feminist. They were a real Junker family from Breslau. Her husband was a career colonel in the Wehrmacht. They showed me around, helped me see Tristan und Isolde etc.

Frau von Oheim had paired me with one of her sons, who was about my age. I was 21 at that point, and he, Hagen, was 20 and a member of the Alpine Climbing Society. On the way up to the Zugspitze, we got above the timberline. Everything was bare and rocky, chamois in the distance, we approached the ice with backpacks. All of a sudden, down the

trail came three guys. There was a brief exchange and suddenly everybody was shouting angrily, except me. I took my knapsack off, ready to help Hagen. Eventually, it blew over without any blows. I said, “What was it?” He answered, “They're from Berlin.” I said, “Yes?” He said, “They wanted me to say, 'Heil Hitler' and I would never do that.” That's why we had the near fight. What better proof could you have that they were really resistant? He confided that he and his two brothers attended the Salemschule on Lake Constance, one of two schools not controlled by the Nazis. (Prince Philip of Britain went there, too.)

Then, just before I left, Frau von Oheim had invited me over for Sunday breakfast in their apartment, in the same building where I was staying. They revealed that her husband had been aide-de-camp to Colonel General Werner von Fritsch. The previous January, Werner von Fritsch was head of a cabal of the other Junker generals, the general staff. Somebody had to go and tell Hitler that the chief of staff, von Blumberg, had to go. Hitler could choose any one of the rest of them to replace von Blumberg. But von Blumberg was too easy for Himmler of the SS to press. They called him “the rubber toy lion.” The officer who was chosen for that finally got to see Hitler after about 48 hours or more. He came back afterwards and recounted, “You know, the man just—I gave him the message twice and the Fuhrer rolled around in a fit on the carpet. I got so disgusted that I finally left without an answer.” The answer came two days later that von Fritsch (somehow, they guessed who it was; the SS had somehow guessed it)—von Fritsch was dismissed, as well as von Blumberg. I never was able to do anything. What could I do? I was just a student going back home. A lot of this became fairly well-known and corroborated much later. It was astonishing that they told me this. I don't know what they expected me to do with the “scoop,” but they knew I was going to leave within two hours.

Q: Sure, you just didn't know. Even if you had...

BOGARDUS: But with this other background of the—Anyway, you were asking what I did when I left school. I took a commercial course in typing and shorthand, elementary

commercial law, that sort of thing. Then I had a short job as an office boy for a time until I finally got a scholarship. That pretty well covers it, I think.

Q: What type of job did you get when you got a regular job? What was your first real job?

BOGARDUS: You mean the summer of '35?

Q: No, we're talking about '39.

BOGARDUS: All right. I went to Colonel Turner's cram school in the summer. That took up most of the summer. After the writtens I tried to get a job. It took me two full months or more to get one. I got it with Food Stamp Plan in Agriculture, headed by whom do you think? Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture.

Q: Now, Colonel Turner's cram school was for what?

BOGARDUS: The Foreign Service. It was specialized training for the Foreign Service at that time. I passed the examination. Then you had to wait until January, you see, to be called up for the oral. I was working in Rochester at that point as a junior economist for $2,000 a year, with some others. Ed Little, who was also a Foreign Service officer, was one of us. I had planned to fly from Buffalo down to appear for the orals. But Buffalo was snowed in completely. The result was that the only way I could arrive at all the following day in Washington was to take the train. I got there with damn little sleep and was really exhausted when I appeared before the board. I flunked the orals. So, G. Howland Shaw said, “Well, you're a good lad. Come back next year.”

Q: G. Howland Shaw being who?

BOGARDUS: Chief of Personnel. He was a Bostonian, and Harvard, as well. The unusual thing about it was that he had been raised Protestant and was converted to Catholicism. So, I continued with the Food Stamp Plan for another year.

In September of 1940 I passed the written exams again. But in October all men of military age registered for the draft, as you recall. I was working in Milwaukee at that point and registered there. I thought that if my draft board were in Des Moines where I grew up I would have a better chance for deferment to serve my country in the Foreign Service. So, I had my draft record transferred there, and as it happened that was a mistake. And my draft number was low, 65. I passed the orals a second time in January, but the Senate had not approved the list and none of us candidates had received commissions. The draft board refused my request, for deferment on government service, and also the Department's official request. I was the initial case for the Department, and they were unsure what to do to obtain me. So, I was inducted as Private on March 7 of 1941.

Q: 1941?

BOGARDUS: Yes. We were still at peace. Shaw sent me a telegram saying, “We're keeping you in mind. We haven't forgotten you.” The rest of the class got their commissions because the Senate had approved by that time. You see, at my time, they had not approved the whole list. So, with no Senate approval, there had been some doubt still. I went through basic training at Chemical Warfare Service over here near Edgewood Arsenal. That was something. We didn't ever do anything with weapons hardly, except to dismantle them. We fired the “45” three times, having learned to take it apart and so forth. The only reason we fired anything at all was that you had to do that, according to regulations, in order to pull guard, to be a guard around the place. What a big contrast to four years later, when I went through it again.

Anyway, on June 21st, I think it was, exactly three months later, when I was pulling guard, a guy came up to me and said, “Hey, you're going to be relieved.” I said, “I don't believe it.” Well, it was true. There was a formal order from the Secretary of War. I forget his name—maybe it was Dern. It said, “Release private first class Bogardus at the request of the Secretary of State.” So, I went right over to the Department and saw somebody else, Jack Erhardt, a crusty, cigar-smoking type. He said, “Well, you're probably going to be away

for quite a while, so go and stay with your parents," adding, "You'll get your commission in the mail." Well, I met the mailman twice a day until I could stand it no longer. I wrote to the Department and I got a brush off, "Yes, we think about you." Eventually, I jumped on the train to come down and see about it in person. I finally found out that the commission had been mailed to Des Moines, and it caught up with me in Washington. I finally got my commission and a diplomatic passport in Washington, rather than Des Moines, and was sent to Montreal on September 3. I'm giving you too much detail.

Q: Actually, no, it's not. It captures the spirit of the times and I think it's important. I also like to get where you were at a certain place. You were in Montreal from when to when?

BOGARDUS: September 3, 1941 until—I got married and we had our first child and I left Montreal on January 20, 1944 for Mombasa, Kenya. That was the east coast of Africa. I traveled alone, of course, leaving my wife and baby. The baby was only five weeks old. (Following my release from the Army, the draft board routinely gave me six month deferments.)

Q: We'll come to that. But I just wanted to get the dates at the beginning. What were you doing in Montreal?

BOGARDUS: I was issuing visas of all kinds. After a year and a half or so, I was head of the visa section. Montreal's main function was as a visa mill. In those days, the Department sent out all beginning young officers to Montreal or Toronto or Vancouver, or Havana maybe. Those were the big visa mills. We had a lot of refugees. The Alien Registration Act had come into effect the year before, in June of 1940, whereby all these aliens in the United States, of whom we had no real record, were required to register. It turned out that there were hundreds of thousands of refugees and others who had come to the United States on temporary visas. They had to be converted to immigrant status.

Q: What was the policy and the attitude towards the various types of refugees in Montreal where you were doing that?

BOGARDUS: The attitude was determined by about five different immigration laws, that's what. We had to look out for immigrants. We had people who were just coming down for a short time. As soon as we entered the war, then the Canadians all had to have visas, even for a weekend trip to New York or Detroit or something like that. I myself issued, like a lot of others, probably about 1,500 immigration visas to refugee Jews. They'd received non-immigrant visas, temporary visas, in 1938 and '39, and had stayed on. It was a real education as to what is Moldavia and Bukovina and Galicia and Lithuania and so forth with documents in four different languages, that you would begin to learn to translate through comparison of texts.

Q: It's been said that the State Department put sort of the "go slow" on Jewish refugees, but, of course, these were people already in Canada.

BOGARDUS: No, they were in the United States at that point. It's not surprising though. Because the rule at that time was, in order to get an immigration visa, you had to get it outside the country. Nowadays, for the last 30 or 35 years, you can change your status from temporary visitor to permanent in the United States with the Immigration Service. At that time, only the Foreign Service could issue a visa, and it had to be done abroad. Now, I have personally seen at least 150 Jewish families who turned up with non-immigrant visas still in the United States, who according to the law, really should never have been given immigration visas in 1938 or 1939. It was obvious that they were never going to leave and go back to where they came from. I remember particularly one man with a Belgium passport. He and his wife and three kids had originated somewhere in Poland. This sticks in my mind because he came up there while employed with the World Zionist Organization. I said, "Please, isn't the Zionist Organization's idea that all Jews should live in Zion, in Palestine?" He expostulated, but that's about all he could do. I gave him the visas, of course. But the point is that our colleagues abroad in the two or three years

before that, young vice consuls, Foreign Service people, career and non-career, had been fudging the legal rules out of the goodness of their hearts, as charity. That may be different from the official policy in the higher realms of the State Department—possibly. But these people were doing it out of kindness.

Q: I think, so often, you can make a law, but if it doesn't sort of make sense, the people who are administering it kind of take it unto themselves. What type of training were you getting? Were you getting any sort of "This is the dispatch and this is how one addresses for certain..."

BOGARDUS: A little bit, but very little of that. A few words, "The proper thing to do is this and here's the way. Look at the regulations." Some hints about your cards and calling on people and having relations with other consular officers in the community, how to behave with the wife of the Consul General and so forth. That Consul General was Homer Byington, who had been chief of personnel himself.

Q: In 1944, you're off to Mombasa, is that right?

BOGARDUS: That's right.

Q: Did you go there? How did you get there?

BOGARDUS: Well, it was the dead of winter and Montreal was very cold at that point. I was to go by RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force) to fly from Dorval Airport in Montreal non-stop to Rabat, Morocco. It turned out it was a DC-3, the workhorse. I got out there at 12:30, according to schedule, to the airport. They put me off and put me off, "Another two hours... Another two hours." Eventually, we didn't get off until 11:45 p.m. There was one other passenger, a British RAF officer who had had medical treatment. We huddled in blankets because there was no heating and so forth. I looked out the window and felt very much reassured because we were not crossing going southeast across Maine, we were going northeast down to Newfoundland or Labrador. That's where we landed at Goose

Bay, Newfoundland with only three of the four engines going. We had to lay-up there for 24 hours while a replacement engine was flown from Montreal.

Q: It must have been a C-24, I think, or something.

BOGARDUS: It's the kind of plane that worked for decades. The crew were half American pilots and half Canadian, but in the RCAF Transport Command. We sat around for about 30 hours, getting a new engine flown up there. In the course of that, the chief pilot, who was from Texas, said, “You know what? There were two of those engines that were new replacements and had to be tested before we left. We were uncertain of them, but at 11 o'clock in the evening, the British Air Vice marshal called me up and said, 'Captain, look, if you don't get that aircraft off the ground by midnight, I'll court martial you.'” So, we landed with three after a motor failed. We got another motor there. Then the flight was to go from Goose Bay, nonstop to Rabat. After we had passed the Azores islands, once again the other replacement engine conked out. We just barely limped into Rabat with three engines again. We would never possibly have made it unless they'd changed those engines.

Then the RAF took over, flew me to Algiers. I saw my colleagues there. Then, the Air Transport Command of the US Air Force flew me to Cairo. From Cairo, I went south by a slow flying boat. The British military had a courier plane service carrying diplomatic pouches, maybe two planes, which flew from there without any wheels, all the way to Johannesburg. It took two and a half days to get to Mombasa, flying up the Nile and across the great Sudd in Sudan, which is a huge swamp, then down to the Indian Ocean. After I was in Mombasa, one of my duties was to meet this courier plane. The American courier would be on it going south and then coming back north. So, twice a week, I would meet that plane. It was very peculiar.

Q: You were in Mombasa from when to when?

BOGARDUS: It was beginning February 1944 until the first of January, 1945. I was drafted a second time. That's why I had to leave. I came back on the only thing available, a slow boat, a Victory freighter.

Q: Let's talk about Mombasa. Mombasa, was this part of South Africa at that time or part of Portugal?

BOGARDUS: It was the main port of the British Colony called Kenya (pron. Keenya) at that time, on the Indian Ocean. Now it's called Kenya and it faces east. At that time, there were only 1,500 white people there and 120,000 blacks and Asians. But it was also the headquarters of the Royal Navy Indian Ocean Fleet. The Royal Navy felt that it was too risky—they couldn't stay in Singapore, obviously, and then even Trincomalee in Ceylon was too dangerous for them even.

I know about the population figures because the British colonial authorities rationed food to restrict imports and shipping. No immigration was allowed, including from upcountry. There were three sets of rations, one each for Europeans, Asians (Hindus, Sikhs, Goanese), and Africans.

Q: Singapore had been bombarded by the Japanese.

BOGARDUS: Well, they went all the way across to the western side of the Indian Ocean there, to Africa. We had to look after some missionaries from the United States. I did all sorts of things. I ran the household, for one thing, with five various kinds of Africans: Kikuyus and Coastal Arabs (very dark skinned), and Muslim and Pagans. It was very exotic, extremely exotic.

Q: How many officers were there?

BOGARDUS: Two.

Q: Who was your Consul?

BOGARDUS: Joseph Touchette. I think he came from Providence, French Canadian descent, a typical French Canadian name. Joseph Irene Touchette.

Q: You say you were doing the administrative chores, but were there any consular problems that were particularly involved?

BOGARDUS: No. We registered a few births. The British were nervous that American missionary Jehovah's Witnesses were subversive. There were two U.S. Navy officers there, and three yeomen, who were liaison with the Royal Navy. The only other thing was, the Gripsholm came through with all the people (over a hundred) being exchanged back from Japanese occupied areas. There was a dreadful rain that day. It was a monsoon. We had to do our best to keep these people occupied in our house, (one sole toilet).

The only other really sticky problem we had was that one day, in our office, which was on the second floor, five big black Americans came in in Army khaki and topee sun helmets, but no insignia. The five of them had a lot of luggage, too, with boots and so forth. They were definitely Americans, all well-educated. The head man came in and addressed us and said, “I'm Colonel So and So” and produced these orders that they were to proceed to Addis Ababa (all five of them). All American authorities were enjoined to help them in whatever way we possibly could. Well, that was fine except that from Mombasa, or even Nairobi, to Addis Ababa is 1,000-1200 miles through virgin territory via Kismayu, Somaliland, which has become much more familiar to Americans lately. The tricky part was that no local hotel (there was no really good hotel there at all) would take them and we couldn't accommodate them in our house. We had only two bedrooms. To survive you need mosquito nets in places like that, too. Eventually, the British Army agreed, “Well, we'll take care of them.” They did take care of them in a decent little camp outside of Mombasa, which they had been using as a transit point for the King's African Rifles going to Burma, and it was empty at the time. Anyway, our airmen were out there, and our Negro officers

were in good shape for the time being. Two days later, we got a telephone call Sunday morning at eight o'clock. It was a British police officer, who said, “There's a certain Mr. (I forget the name) I have with me.” I said, “Yes?” He said, “He's one of that group of five.” I said, “Yes?” He said, “Well, he's causing a disturbance.” I said, “What's so disturbing?” He said, “Well, he's going around the souks and the bazaars with lots of money and he's wearing shoes. All the natives are beginning to get in a hubbub about this, because they've never encountered a well-to-do black man. Won't you please come and take him back?” I had to do that. Fortunately, the British Army arranged for the group to go up to Nairobi and get on a convoy of British Army trucks going to Addis Ababa, and they were gone. It was terribly embarrassing to us, but we couldn't really do anything to change the situation. The segregation and race distinction was so strong at that point. The authorities feared a recurrence of a stevedore strike of a year before. Also, they were nervous about our American Jehovah's Witness missionaries in the back country, including Tanganyika.

Q: Well, those captured the era. Were there any seamen problems?

BOGARDUS: Yes, we had one minor boatswain or something like that died in his bunk on a US freighter. The smell of ammonia there was such that he probably had imbibed too much of that, and alcohol. I had to see that he was properly attended to and his remains taken care of and everything sealed up, and so forth. We put him back on the ship. They did have cold storage on the ship and that's where they put him. The same ship took him back. Burial or ship cold storage within 24 hours was the limit in that climate.

Q: Then, all of a sudden, you find your self redrafted. How did that happen?

BOGARDUS: Well, they just discovered I existed. This was the Milwaukee board this time. Previous to that time, I had received extensions and permission to stay abroad routinely. Later, I was told that the Cissy Patterson Washington newspaper called me a draft dodger. Well, I came in and went to Milwaukee and thanked them. They said, “Whoa, really? Well, okay, then go see your parents. You'll hear from us” and very shortly, I did. This

time, basic was quite different. I went to Camp Croft in the mountains of South Carolina, which was infantry replacement training camp, which means you replaced the casualties, wherever they occurred. They allowed us to sleep about six or seven hours a night, except on Saturday night, I guess, until Sunday. We were just pooped all the time. The interesting thing was, first thing when I arrived there and got out of the train, we were handed rifles. So different from the previous experience. They said, “This is your wife. You'd better keep your hands on her all the time.” That's the way it was. It was very rugged training also. At the end of six weeks again, I got orders...

I forgot to say that, coming through the Department on the way out to Milwaukee, I talked with a couple of Foreign Service officers in the Department. I told them I was going to be in the Army, and so forth. One of them said, “How would you like to be in OSS?” I said, “What is OSS?” He said, “Oh, it's some sort of intelligence outfit.” I said, “Gee, that sounds great.” The first time, when I was sent to Montreal, I had asked to go to Geneva, Stockholm, or Algiers, all real hot wire intelligence locations. Anyway, this time, I got it, and came to Washington just before VE Day. So, then I came here and went to a little schoolhouse which no longer exists. It has become Virginia Avenue near the Kennedy Center. I went in there. They said, “Well, take off your uniform and put it in the basement and then put on this nondescript uniform without any indication of identity.” I went through testing and was initiated into OSS. I studied background about German intelligence, enemy intelligence, and so forth, order of battle and location of Nazi funds. Then the order came out: “Too many American military going to Europe. We don't want any more in the European theater.”

Then I started studying for the China theater. They asked me, “Well, do you think—We've got somebody in Bangkok running a clandestine radio service, reporting to us who should be relieved. Would you go? There are two members of the Thai cabinet who are reporting information to us about rice supplies and location of enemy Japanese units and identities of possible war criminal. They just broadcast for one-two minutes a day.” I said, “How are you going to get me there?” They said, “Oh, we'll find a way.” Fortunately, the war ended

before I went. In the meantime, while I was waiting around for word about that, I was with a little group there in the OSS, grading intelligence reports from occupied China, coming out of Kunming and working with Chinese-English dictionaries, grading the intelligence, from A (perfect gospel) to F (demonstrably a lie); one to six for a perfect “knows what he's talking about” to “probably a liar.” On the side, I did one bit of translating from German into English, which were the instructions by the German Foreign Office, a circular of a year before. They wanted it translated for one reason or other. Lo and behold, six months later, after the war, the Department of State published it without attributions. My translation without attribution.

Another big thing was that, on the twentieth of September, we got word of mouth that Wild Bill Donovan, the head of the OSS, wanted to see everybody and wanted to see us in the Christian Heurich Brewery, which was a big barn containing the archives of the OSS at that point. It no longer exists. I went over there about mid-day at the appointed time and probably 200 others came over, other people of various ranks. It didn't matter what your rank was, you know, the OSS had no military spit and polish or saluting or military order or anything of the sort. We all went over there and he gave a very short address. He said, “I'll read to you a message that I have from the Commander in Chief.” He was just on a little pedestal about one and a half feet high. He said, in effect, “The OSS will cease to exist at the end of September and part of it will go to the War Department; a smaller part of it will go to the State Department.” There was a third one. “The OSS will no longer exist after that.” So, I jumped for joy and went around to the State Department and said, “On September 30, I'm going to be available.” There was a slight argument as to whether I was eligible for a slight increase in salary up to $3,000 per year instead of $2,700 (unclassified A, that is). They agreed.

Q: You were married by this time.

BOGARDUS: Oh, yes. I had seen my wife very little. My wife stayed with her parents in Montreal for a time, and also with mine in Des Moines. So, then the Department said,

“We'll let you know where your new post is.” Jack Erhardt...What was his name? He was sort of a rough character.

Q: You can fill this in.

BOGARDUS: He said, “You want to go to Europe or Asia?” It didn't take me long because I knew French and German. I said, “I want to go to Europe.” “Okay, that's all it takes. You go on up to Montreal where the folks are and so forth.” Eventually, we were assigned to Prague. That was a terrific journey to get there.

Q: You were in Prague from when to when?

BOGARDUS: December 5 of '45 until Easter of '48. That was a most fantastic period.

Q: We want to talk about this, but first, how did you get there? I mean, this was right after the war. Things must have been in pretty bad shape.

BOGARDUS: That was an odyssey, it certainly was.

Q: Your wife came with you?

BOGARDUS: Yes. We took the Queen Elizabeth from Halifax. It was still a troop ship, basically, but they allowed some civilians on board. That took us to Southampton. Our objective was Prague and I had written ahead to the ambassador (you had to to do this sort of thing). On the way, I said, “How are we going to communicate with these people? They all know German as a second language, but we know that that's very unpopular.” It just happened that Czech colleagues who had been in their consular service in Montreal, who had met me earlier, were going back, too. So, I wandered around to them and said, “How do you say, 'I'm an American and I don't know how to speak Czech. Do you speak English perhaps?'” “No, no, of course not.” And then, “French maybe?” “No, no.” “Well, what about German?” “Oh, yes.” So, they did, they told us. That was very, very useful at that time because in Prague they were grabbing people who looked Germanic and putting

them into a little concentration camp until they found out whether they were Germans. It worked like a charm, especially for my wife, who has some German ancestry, partly, and looks pale and blue-eyed and so forth. It worked. When we got there we went through the routine, and invariably the Czech answer was “Natuerlich, Was wollen Sie?”.

Q: Did you take a train?

BOGARDUS: Oh, that's right. The train took us from Southampton to London. We stayed around several days there in London. The embassy was trying to figure out, “How are we going to get these people off on their way?” Eventually, they got us on a Channel boat to France and Paris, a train, the boat train. We arrived in Paris and nobody knew we were coming. It was not terribly easy, but as soon as they did find out we were there, then the Embassy was very helpful. It was late in November. When we got word that we were going to fly to Prague, I sent a telegram to the American embassy, the ambassador, saying, “Here we are. We're going to be there.” Well, the airline said the airplane was not going to fly after all. Two days later, we finally did take off. It was to go to Prague. We put down near Frankfurt and they said, “No, we've been diverted. This plane goes to Berlin.” Eventually, they flew us to Prague. So, it was a three, four, or five day delay in all this. When we arrived in Prague airport, the only American around was a man to meet the courier... Well, he was designated to meet the courier and trade pouches. He wasn't going to pay a bit of attention to us. And we didn't know, for example, the word for “men” and “women” at the airport. And my wife took our little daughter, who was two years old that day into the men's room. Anyway, that's the sort of thing. Eventually, we got a colleague —we called downtown. We got through to the embassy to the duty officer, Walter Birge. He was a third secretary like me. Then our odyssey was over, except not entirely because we stayed in the Alcron Hotel for several days, which is one of the two finest hotels, or had been pre-war. But it had just been vacated by the Russian officers who left their lice behind in the beds (bedbugs). The milk was not in bottles at all, all food was severely rationed. We had a hard time, especially with this little two-year-old daughter. You'd go across the street to the milk store and take your own pail. There was no real cereal even,

no real bread even. The coffee was ersatz. Well, the embassy helped us out a bit more, but even they couldn't do so much, except the ambassador got us a supply of canned milk a few days later.

His name was Laurence Steinhardt from New York. He was a non-career ambassador but he was the first ambassadorial or chief of mission appointment by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, who sent him as minister to Stockholm. Then he went to Peru after that, and then to Moscow during the early part of the war, and then they had gone to Ankara and finally to Prague. The Steinhardts had arrived in early June of '45, six months earlier. The chancery is a big, old building, the Sch#nbrunn Palace that the U.S. government bought in 1921. It's baroque, one of the finest places. It's very old and extremely interesting.

We didn't get settled into our house really until early January of '46. The embassy gave us the German equivalent of a jeep, called a “Hanomag,” which apparently had been to Stalingrad and back. The motor jumped from extra low to high gear. It was entirely open in the winter, and the winter can be quite cold there. But the Czechs were so eager to see foreigners that they immediately said, “Oh, we're a western people. Remember, we're a western people.” That's true. I'm going on and on and on here.

Also in January my father in Des Moines very naively forwarded through to me in the open mail in an official brown envelope with official letterhead a routine appreciation of my loyal services to the OSS! This arrived by mailman after having undoubtedly been opened and scrutinized by the Czech intelligence, including the Communist Party. There was nothing I could do to make them believe that I had left the OSS. Years later, in 1955, the East German Communist Party printed a book ostensibly of all CIA covert agents, and there I was, correctly listed as in Hamburg. Of course, we chuckled at their wasting energy watching my espionage actions.

At the same time I did get a letter through APO mail from my cousin, Katherine Bogardus, a school teacher in Clinton, Illinois. She asked me to get in contact with a Czech lady, a

Mrs. Kohak with whom she had gone to college before the War in Monmouth College, Illinois. Most fortuitously, at the same time John Bruins, the DCM, told me to carry an official request for the regular exchange of the Congressional Record with the equivalent of the Czechoslovak National Assembly. And, who was the National Assembly Archivist, but Dr. Miloslav Kohak? It was his wife who was Katherine's friend. We quickly started the permanent exchange of the two records, and my wife and I became good friends with the Kohaks. And through him I received the basic biographical data on all members of the Assembly, officially confidential for Czech officials. Although the Department encouraged confidential biographic reporting, I never received any recognition from the Department or the Embassy for this minor coup.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about Steinhardt and how he ran the embassy and your impression of Steinhardt? He's a major figure in American diplomacy of that period.

BOGARDUS: You've heard about him already?

Q: Oh, I've heard about him, but I'd like to hear your impressions about his way of operating.

BOGARDUS: He was a very astute and shrewd individual. I remember talking to him four or five months after we got there, just chatting around one afternoon with other people there. Fortune magazine had published the pictures of a number of ambassadors of various kinds. They classified them as professional, semi-professional, and amateur. Fortune put him in the semi-professional. I said, “Are you pleased with your classification, Mr. Ambassador?” He said, “No, that's not right. I've had on-the-job training for 12 years now, running embassies and legations!” That was quite right. So, he was very, very shrewd.

In early May of '46, there was the first big election. The communists and Social Democrats as the two joint Marxist parties were really running against the democratic parties - the National Socialists or the Benes Party, and the People's Party, which was largely Catholic,

coalition on the democratic side. Of course, we had the very best relations with those two. As the results came in, we were there in the national headquarters of the Ministry of Interior in Prague. It turned out that the communists were getting a plurality and, with the Social Democrats in their coalition, they were going to have 53% or 51% of the national legislature. All these journalists were hovering around Ambassador Steinhardt, getting his comment on the returns which were most unsatisfactory to our side. He was basically an attorney and very strong for property rights. In this case, he was really acting like an attorney in a criminal case. They would come at him and he would begin with an oblique answer which was just five degrees off-line, not direct, and maybe add a little more comment, going farther, farther, farther from the subject. Five minutes later, he was still going strong, talking about something entirely different. He got away from the subject beautifully. I just admired that. That was very useful at that point.

I must say also that, later on, he could be quite severe and properly so, too. He discovered that three of our secretaries of the embassy were ordering through the embassy commissary large amounts of hard liquor from abroad. One instance came up in which three young female secretaries each ordered 10 cases of whiskey. That really caused him to blow his top. He said, “You're lucky. I'm going to let you have one each. The rest of it is available for the whole staff.” But he really gave them a reaming out for that, very properly.

Q: They were selling it, I take it?

BOGARDUS: Well, that was the surmise. At that point, my wife and I could have bought lots of things with cigarettes. We certainly didn't want to do it, absolutely wouldn't. We know one other embassy colleague in the USIA, who acquired large Oriental rugs, unfortunately. Two cigarettes would be a very good tip at that point. If you could offer a carton, you could get a lot of things. You could buy furniture, and so forth. We bought a few things at a public auction in crowns. The other part of it was that a big mistake had been made before we got there, probably by the Army, and our Treasury Department should not have acquiesced to this. At the end of the war, they agreed that the exchange

rate should be 50 crowns to the dollar. After a bank fee, we were getting 49 3/4 crowns per dollar, which was ridiculous. Day after day, the Herald Tribune reported the dollar was being traded for 225-300 in Zurich or Basel. That went on and on until we came home in 1948. I complained about that bitterly to Bartley Gordon, who was sort of debriefing me. I think they finally wised up to that error. It was bad for the embassy's accounts, too. All the other embassies were dealing surreptitiously in the black market—we felt confident they were. The French, the British, the Dutch, the Belgians, and so forth.

Q: What was your job at the embassy?

BOGARDUS: My main job was to look at the Prague newspapers, a whole gamut of them, each sponsored by one of the six political parties, four Czech and two Slovaks, and pick out things that should be translated. I would give them their thing, “You do this,” and so forth, from the various parties. The other thing I did was, I gave passes to get on the airplane, which we had once a week, to fly from Prague to Frankfurt. We had control of that, of the passengers. But that was a very small part of my work.

One thing that happened, which is interesting—the way it turned out was unfortunate—a young Pole came in. He was a priest, I think. I think he was dressed as a priest. I'm not quite sure, maybe not. But he turned out to have a clerical passport from the Cardinal Bishop of Krakow. I forget his name, but I recognized it once. It was not a regular passport at all. It was a clerical one, just valid within the Church. He said, “Won't you help, as we've got a lot of Bibles that we want to send out.” Well, I'm sure there were a lot of other things as well. I was sympathetic to that. I said, “Sure, it's all right with me, but you'll have to go across town to talk with another office.” There was an international pair of officers, one American and one French, who had to okay what I did as well. I made the mistake of telling our guy, Kovach, who was a Hungarian-American on the phone, that somebody special was coming, and the police nabbed them on their way over there. I felt very sorry about it. There were Polish troops in Germany and certainly at the end of the war in Western Europe, too, and they wanted to try to get together, I suppose. That's a shame.

Q: During this '46 to '48 period, from your observation, what was the political situation in Czechoslovakia and what was our role?

BOGARDUS: Well, we were trying to help them resurrect the pre-war democracy, the democratic republic, in every way we could. The cards were stacked very firmly against us. One thing I did for the ambassador was, very directly, from him in 1946. There was a ground control approach system out at the airport that we had supplied on a temporary basis. We received orders (and this was a big mistake) from Paris in ordinary mail, I think it was (something like that), in clear anyway, that they could read, saying, “Give it to the Czechs.” The ambassador saw this and said, “Oh, that's not right. They shouldn't get things just free. They should pay something for it, to make it valuable for them.” This was his attitude about American property that had been stolen, taken, expropriated abroad. He was very keen on this. So, he said, “It's worth $250,000, this ground control approach. I want you to get $125,000 out of this. We'll let them grab it for that.” So, we started off the negotiations and I said, “$125,000, not crowns.” Well, we went back and forth for about three weeks. They complained about this and that. Finally, they came out. They called me over there and they pulled out this original instruction, or maybe it was a later one, which was a clear telegram. They just handed it over to me and said, “What do you think of this?” I was terribly embarrassed, of course. So I said, “Well, that doesn't agree with what I've heard. The ambassador doesn't think that's right” and so forth, and so I left and went back. Finally, we settled with them for $90,000 in dollars and a balance of $35,000 in crowns. But I had to threaten them by saying, “Well, otherwise, we have another candidate for this in Austria. They would like to have this, too.” That was a lie, but it was a diplomatic lie and it had good cause in that case. So, that took a bit.

One other thing that happened when we were there, in the spring of 1946. Well, a number of things happened. In March of '46, the Czechs sent us a formal third person note, saying, “Greetings” and all that sort of thing and, “We have a number of German aliens here,

several hundred thousand of them, that we would like to send over to the American zone. Please tell us how soon you will receive them."

Q: These were Sudeten Deutsche?

BOGARDUS: Leftover. Our occupation authorities in Frankfurt refused a couple of times. Then, finally, the third time (this was oral), they came back and said, "Well, if you Americans won't receive them into the American zone, we're sure that our Russian friends will receive these people into the Russian zone." Eisenhower and everybody else was saying, "We can't feed everybody who's already here," but within three weeks, the trains began filling up. By the end of the month, we were sending out 50 trainloads of Sudeten Germans a day to Nuremberg and points west. That's exactly the way it happened. They had us on a barrel and they were not going to relent. Our democratic politicians said, "Hell, we've got this election coming up in May and we couldn't possibly refuse to expose that. We couldn't stand up for these Sudeten Germans, even though we know that, for the long term, it's a terrible brain drain and a loss to the economy, et cetera. But it's the only thing. We have to. Otherwise, the Commies will win everything." So, that's the way it happened. The commentator Dorothy Thompson raged about it, to no avail.

Just about that time, too, Marshal Tito came to town. I happened to be out and watched that. It was very difficult. You couldn't see him. There were three big limousines that were all black. The security was severe. All windows closed in town, and sharpshooters on roofs. Also just about that time, I remember this. There was a circular telegram to every post in the world from the Department, saying, "There is this man, Josef Broz-Tito who has come to power in Yugoslavia. If anyone knows any biographical information about this man, please report at once. We want to know everything we possibly can about his background and who he is and so forth, his personality." That was an interesting thing. That was the first time I had ever seen that.

Q: Did you have any contact with the political parties in Czechoslovakia?

BOGARDUS: Oh, yes, a lot of them.

Q: How did that work?

BOGARDUS: My wife and I knew several politicians, Ivo Duchacek of the People's Party (Catholics) and Jan Stransky, National Socialist (Benes) Party and Firt, a moderate of the Social Democrats. I must say that they had originally been cultivated by the OSS man. By that time, it was called SSU, I think. They had all come over from London, and had been in London together. So, they knew each other. We had social parties with them. I had something else I wanted to say. I'm 78 and I lose the trend of things.

Q: It's no problem.

BOGARDUS: I wanted to tell you this though. This is one of the things that I— A fellow colleague, a young officer, came up a few months after we were there, maybe in early February of '46, with his wife. His name was Claiborne Pell. Had you heard that?

Q: Oh, yes, I interviewed him. He talked about his time there and in Bratislava.

BOGARDUS: This was before Bratislava.

Q: But please tell me about your impression. He's just retiring as a Senator.

BOGARDUS: Well, he doesn't respond to my letters anymore. I could tell you a damaging incident about him, but there's no point in doing it. We first met him and his wife—I went across the room and I said, “I'll bet he's Princeton.” Sure enough, he was. I didn't know, but there was something about him. Princeton puts a cachet on people. Harvard men are very heterogeneous. You can just sense it. He was very keen on dealing with the Marxists and trying to butter them up a bit, or at least get information with the Fierlinger brothers. Zdenek Fierlinger was the Prime Minister after '46. He had been the Czech ambassador in Moscow during the war. Then there was his brother. I forget his brother's first name.

He had been in the Office of War Information in New York during the war. But he too was very, very susceptible to communism. Claiborne did try to dialogue with these people a bit, maybe. I'm not implying anything wrong, not at all. He told me on the side that one of his ambitions was to resurrect The North American Review, the ownership of which he had inherited from his father. He thought it would be a good idea. It was quite clear from his discussions and so forth that his desire at that time was to play the role of a British lord in the House of Lords. Eventually, he did. Of course, The North American Review never was revived.

Q: Were there any prohibitions about opening a dialogue with the communists at this '46 to '48 period?

BOGARDUS: Well, I don't think we ever even inquired about it. We did see democratic officials like Jan Masaryk once in a while. For a time, I worked in the same small office with Charles Yost in this Embassy in the room just above the entrance down below from the street. He later became a very prominent ambassador to the UN. I want to tell you something about him, since we're on to Charles Yost. In July of '1947, if you recall, the US proposed the Marshall Plan. The Western European governments all said, “Sure, that sounds great to us. We'll go in for it.” The Czech government said, “We're invited, too? We think that's fine.” So, they very quickly agreed. It so happened that two or three Polish cabinet ministers were in town when this occurred, including the Foreign Minister, Jyrankowicz. They too said, “Well, that's fine. But we can't guarantee the Polish government. As soon as we get back to Warsaw, we'll join you.” The Czechs said, “Boy, that's great. We're all going to go in on the Marshall Plan, the Poles and Czechoslovakia.” Well, two or three days later, the Czechs withdrew from the Marshall Plan.

Charles Yost, on that very weekend, was in charge of the embassy because the ambassador and the DCM, John Bruins, were off on a boar hunt organized by the Czech Foreign Ministry, with all the diplomatic corps. Charles wrote a smashing analytical analysis of this in a long telegram, saying, “This means that the Kremlin, or Stalin, has

definitely stopped this and will not permit it. It's very likely that they will reestablish something like the Red Army in this country." That was eight months before it actually happened. He sent this off when he was alone in charge, before the ambassador came back. But I know this because he called three or four of us who were still in there, political officers, read it aloud and said, "Now, any comment on this? Anybody disagree with anything in there?" Nobody had anything to disagree with at all. So, it went off.

A couple of days later, I happened to have a good contact, who told me the following story. The Czech government had received a stern command from Stalin by the Russian ambassador to send a delegation up to Moscow, to the Kremlin, to explain the adherence to the Marshall Plan. So, they sent three ministers: Jan Masaryk, the Foreign Minister, officially neutral in the Cabinet between democrats and Marxists, Zdenek Fierlinger leftist Social Democrat Prime Minister, and Jan Drtina, Minister of Justice of the Benes National Socialist Party. Don't be put off by "National Socialist."

Q: It had nothing to do with the old German National Socialists.

BOGARDUS: Far from it. So, the three of them went up in a special plane. On the way, they agreed, "We'll have a little get-together before we go in to see Stalin. We'll freshen up and so forth. We'll concert our position and what we'll say and so forth, and meet in 45 minutes, something like that." They were lodged in the Kremlin. They separated, and Fierlinger didn't show up at the appointed time. He showed up about a half hour late, trembling and sweating, white, very agitated. He said, "Stalin called me in by myself. He said, 'You people are going to review this and revoke it and refuse the Marshall Plan if you know what's good for your country and yourselves.'" They agreed they had to take the message and came back and that's what happened. Now, there was another source who reported the same thing to somebody else, but I think I was among the very first, at least, to get it. That report reached the Department by telegram about the time Yost's despatch (or airgram) arrived.

Q: How heavy did you find when you were there, the hand of the Soviets? Were the Soviets calling the shots or not?

BOGARDUS: Up to then, fairly pressing, but mostly persuasive. Well, calling the shots, yes, but not heavy-handed, not especially. Just about this time, they began to do that. That was the time, too, when the ambassador sent Claiborne Pell down to Bratislava to open it up in the Bristol Hotel. He sent me down there later with an instruction for Claiborne. We visited the Pells and then came back. But this really gives you the explanation why Czechoslovakia and the Marshall Plan did include the Czechs.

Q: You left before the coup, I take it?

BOGARDUS: No, it began on February 20th. Early in February, the ambassador had gone home for medical reasons and he did not come back until February 20. We were at Ruzyne Airport. We knew there was the beginning of a severe Czech government crisis between the communists and the non-communists. While we were waiting for the ambassador at Ruzyne Airport, our SSU (ex-OSS) officer who was with us said, “I just learned that Soviet Ambassador Zorin just came in from Moscow on the far side of the field.” Then we met the ambassador.

That night the whole crisis became ominous. Finally, it came to a head on February 22 or 23. I felt it my duty to go down to the center of town and see how things were developing there after President Benes had given in. My wife was at home and there were wild Communist militia in the neighborhood, running around with rifles and searching for enemies. She was terrified. Then, as this developed, the big news journalists (The New York Times, Time Magazine, Post, and so forth) descended on Prague, at the embassy especially, maybe 15 or 20 of them. It was a real ring ding show. Finally, it was all over and the Iron Curtain was coming down. My wife received no less than three telephone calls from other ladies, saying, “We invited you to a reception (dinner, etc.), but under the circumstances, we must postpone.” Of course, we understood.

Q: What was the attitude of the embassy and the officers? How much of a surprise was this and was there a feeling of frustration?

BOGARDUS: Yes, definitely a feeling of frustration. We were cooperating with the British embassy, too, in reporting this and how things were going. Things ended up very badly. What really annoyed a lot of us was that Henry Wallace came out with a fatuous statement in New York. He was running for President. He said, “Oh, you see, the Russians just stepped in ahead of the Americans who were plotting a coup. Our Ambassador Steinhardt got back there, but he was too late.” That especially enraged me because my grade school was just 300 yards from Henry Wallace's home in Des Moines, Iowa. I had known his son, young Hank, fairly well. We always bought our milk from the Wallace's dairy and all that sort of thing. So, I came up for home leave some six weeks later, and I went into the ambassador. This just happened to be that way. It was approaching Easter, and Jan Masaryk had died in the meantime.

Q: He had either jumped or been pushed out of a window.

BOGARDUS: That's right, yes. We saw his funeral with immense numbers of people. Just before Easter, we came up for home leave and transfer, probably. So, I went to the ambassador and said, “In view of my background with Henry Wallace and so forth, I would like to go there to New York to talk to him. It's obvious that he is influenced by radically Marxists or Commies. He's honest, he's not communist, he's not socialist even but he's partly under the influence of crypto-commies. I'd like to get to him and speak to him and correct him and tell him, “What you said is a lot of baloney; that the Ambassador went home for a private operation and was in the USA.” The Ambassador thought about it for a few minutes. He liked me quite a bit, but he said, “No, George, don't do it. It wouldn't do any good. You couldn't get to him, and wouldn't persuade him.” So, I followed orders and did not. I wish I had been able to.

So, following that, we got off on home leave and he wrote me a very nice letter and said, “I hope you'll come back and serve with me.” Our daughter was just four years old at that point so I respectfully declined to go back. I could have had a promotional push behind me, but I chose not to because of my family.

Q: When you were there after the coup, was there the general feeling that something was going to happen?

BOGARDUS: Yes. It was very dangerous any time after December. I heard from the Time correspondent that he listened to Masaryk in December and Jan had said to them, “This is off the record, gentlemen, but sometimes, I think my father made a big mistake in breaking up the Austro-Hungarian Empire.” Terrible, remarkable confession. We learned also that in early March after the Iron Curtain came down, Jan Masaryk said to the coalition government- (You see, the majority were communist by that time, but he was Foreign Minister still.) He said, “Well, gentlemen, I've got a meeting coming up for the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) in Montreal this month and I'll be away for about a week.” The rest of them just roared with laughter. “You aren't going anywhere.”

We also knew that he had a mistress there who lived just around on the other side of the square of where Masaryk lived, which was the Foreign Office, the Cerninsky Palace. Marcia Davenport was her name. She was a novelist, American. She called up Jack Guiney, our admin. officer at the embassy and said, “Jan tells me that I am to leave right away. Will you take care of my refrigerator and my automobile and the rest of my belongings (furniture, etc.)? I have to go right away.” She did. So, we did have some inkling that things were really very foreboding.

Q: I assume you were going out and talking to various people both in government and private life to get the temperature of the times. Did you find any support for this coup by the communists?

BOGARDUS: I was not able to go out and talk with the people, no. They wouldn't want to talk. It was too dangerous for them to talk with us—that is, after Christmastime. There was very little of that. Hardly anybody did any of that. One friend of ours came and said, “If you'd like to know a good way to get people out, I can tell you a precise way over the mountains and Southern Bohemia.” I thanked him and passed the word along, but that was not for me. The ambassador had instructed all of us not to get mixed up in any of this sort of thing, covert activity, which was very frustrating for us. I should tell you that in October or November, a good friend of mine, Miloslav Kohak, who had been head of the Czechoslovak YMCA and had also been incarcerated as a spy by the Nazis and lost his teeth in a concentration camp previously, asked me whether he should accept the job of being the principal editor of Suobodne Slovo, the National Socialist paper for the Benes Party. We talked about it over lunch for maybe an hour or so. I said, “Well, you know, as a devout Czech and a devout Christian, you do have to do that.” He did, very capably, and suffered for it later because he and his wife had to ski over the mountains with their two children. When we left, we knew that was impending and took some of their luggage with us on a train and handed it over to the Embassy in Paris, contrary to the ambassador's orders. I think that's about everything I have to say about Steinhardt. He asked me to come back and I declined. Then we waited around and I got orders to go to Algiers.

Q: This would have still been 1948?

BOGARDUS: That's right. It was still a French regime at that point. In fact, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were—Algeria was technically part of France. Morocco was a kingdom and Tunisia a republic. My stay there in Algiers was very—We spoke French with everybody, of course, whereas we had been speaking mainly German or English in Prague. My stay there was cut short, less than two years until 1950 for the following reasons. Following general instructions from the Department, USAID was a potential around the world, especially in an underdeveloped country. They had encouraged us, not only for that reason, but just in general, to make contact with the opposition. The

opposition in North Africa were the Arab and the Muslim potential rebels. The French in charge were the very right wing pieds noirs. Consul General George Tait authorized me to meet twice with the most moderate of the Muslim opposition, Ferhat Abbas, who had a French wife. He was also a dentist with a French education. So, he wasn't really rabid. There were several others who were really rabid about pushing the French into the ocean. But I had had a couple of talks with his aide in my home next to the St. George Hotel regarding USAID potential and how it might be used and that sort of thing, very innocuous and never a commitment. Then, however, finally, there was a small notice in Le Monde newspaper in Paris about “What's going on with this secret meeting of this American Vice Consul in Algiers?” Elim O'Shaughnessy, who was the desk officer at that point, was hyper-sensitive about it, I thought, but he told me later that it came across his desk that they were looking for people for economic training, and I had indicated an eventual interest. So, he put me in for that.

The other thing that happened was that I had scored what I thought was a real intelligence coup regarding foreign cryptography of another government and bucked that in with the label “top secret.” I thought top secret was the absolute top. Well, it turned out that there were more copies of top secret things going around Washington than you might think. It never possibly occurred to me at that point that going as high as that there was really no danger at all. The word came back, “Leave that to the CIA.” We did have a CIA man there and I turned it over to him. I won't be any more precise than that, but when I got back, Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, sent for me. He chewed me out for doing that, of all things. He said, “Never ever mention this again.” Well, I haven't mentioned the core of it, not really even told you. But that's what it was. I haven't said anything to anybody all these years. It wouldn't matter at all now.

That's why we were sent then to what we thought was a rather pallid posting, Toronto, where after a year, I was promoted to be Consul. We arrived there when the Korean War started. One of the important things I did for the Department of Commerce was to make a basic thorough survey of the machine tool industry in Canada, which was very helpful to

the American machine tool companies looking to subcontract war contracts. There were various kinds of machine tools, six or eight different categories, all that sort of thing. They could pass on to them war contracts. I think it helped very considerably.

Q: We're talking about the Korean War and where we were mobilizing again to produce military equipment.

BOGARDUS: Another big job I had was reporting on mining all the time. Canada was extremely important. Mining was 10% of the Canadian GNP and probably still is. There was an enormous American investment of nine or ten billion dollars at stake, and a lot of interest. My reports were incorporated in US Mining Year Book. They were particularly interested in nickel promotion for armor plate and that sort of thing. Then there were developing oil fields out in the west. I had to keep track of them. Also, the approaching St. Lawrence seaway. There were lots of aspects of that: who can draw water out, who was going to be in charge, all that sort of thing.

Q: How did you find the Canadians as far as getting information from them?

BOGARDUS: Oh, splendid. I did another survey on liquor control there. We were eager to get into the liquor sales in Canada and it was all controlled by provincial liquor control boards. The boards were and still are very protectionistic of the Canadian beer and whiskey industries. We had a delightful time with the Scottish people there, going to St. Andrew's Ball and learning Scottish dances and that sort of thing.

But I do want to get to this one incident that really shook me. In the summer of 1953, George Haering, who was the Consul General, turned to me and said, “I've been invited to go to an Israeli bond rally. Would you go in my place?” So, I said, “Well, I've never been to one of these shindigs.” It turned out to be quite a shindig, at one of the biggest movie theaters in town. The big speaker there was Moshe Sharett, who was the Israeli Foreign Minister at that point. He had arrived there from Los Angeles and Detroit and was going on to New York. It's important to remember that background. He gave the usual boast,

what you would expect, even going to say, “We've got potash deposits down there in the Negev” and all sorts of things. But the one of the other big things was, he was telling his audience—the wealthiest, most important Jewish people in all of Ontario—about 1,400 of them. He subtly, “You folks stayed comfortably home while we overseas were being put through the Holocaust. What have you done about it? If you don't come to join us and live in Zion, the least you can do is to haul out your wallet and sign over a big, big check. It's a good business deal, too.” So, that's the sort of thing I expected and we did get. But what I did not expect was, toward the end of his speech, “Hey, put the spotlight up there in the balcony. There is (something like) Sammy Steinberger, Squadron Leader of the RCAF. Stand up, Sammy!” Sammy stood up with his RCAF uniform and medals and the MC announced, “Sammy has just come back from Israel. He spent his vacation there and he helped out the Israeli Air Force, shooting down two Egyptian planes, and now he's back.” Everybody gave a big and long applause. Well, I thought, “Had the same thing happened in Los Angeles and Detroit, with the American Air Force?” I believe I reported this routinely with zero response. I was in the Department a few years later, with Tom Hirschfeld, who was a young FSO working for me in Intelligence Research. He happened to be a native of Darmstadt, Germany, and had also been a Marine Corps aviator in the Korean War. When I told him about this, he just blew his top. He said, “That man should have been court-martialed!”

Q: Yes, he should have.

BOGARDUS: Certainly. But it shows you how these people were cajoled into this sort of thing and confusing Israeli citizenship or Zionism and being a Jew. I kept that in the back of my mind ever since and I have occasionally been able to bring it out with some of my Jewish friends. Incidentally, later on about that time, Dulcie Anne Steinhardt, daughter of Ambassador Steinhardt, who had married an RCAF officer, a veteran of the Battle of Britain. She and her husband, Alan Sherlock, were stationed in Toronto. We saw them a number of times. A few years after that, we were down here and they had a son born to them. Dulcie Anne had become an Episcopalian like her husband, the son, Victor, was

going to be Episcopalian. We were asked to be his godparents. We were and still are. He is quite active and we know the family very intimately.

Q: She is the daughter of Laurence Steinhardt?

BOGARDUS: That's right. She was 20 years old when we knew her, in January of '46. We're very, very close with Dulcie Anne, Victor and his sister Lauren. We attended his wedding just a couple of years ago. We see them all the time. I'm just pointing this out.

Later on, when I was in Stuttgart, the line of where I'm bending had become so keen on ending the American government subservience to Israel and the Jewish lobby. In the late autumn of 1966, it became evident that the headquarters of USAFE (United States Armed Force in Europe) was to be moved to Patch Barracks from Paris. Patch Barracks is just outside Stuttgart about nine miles. The French government was insisting that it leave France. From then until March 1967, the number of American generals and admirals in Patch and Stuttgart, rose from four generals to 20 generals and admirals. The generals were both Army and Air Force, including one at the “Siedlung”, which is where a lot of us lived in groups of bungalows.

Q: “Siedlung” being German for “settlement.”

BOGARDUS: That's right. On March 15, 1967, Consul General Sweet and I, like Ambassador George McGhee, attended the installation ceremonies effecting the transfer of USAFE from Paris to Patch with USAFE General David Birchinal (four-star) in command. That was the only time I've ever seen an American ambassador in protocol place second to a military officer or anyone else. But McGhee did because this was an overall command comprehending everything from the North Cape to Basra and Casablanca.

Simultaneously, the Consulate General was tasked with storing and coordinating emergency and evacuation plans (E and E) for Americans outside the Iron Curtain in

Europe and North Africa. We received no increase in staff, although the embassy in Paris had two persons performing these duties and nothing else. Consul General Sweet retired on March 31 and I was in charge until the arrival of his successor, Bruce Lancaster, late on June 6, 1967. On June 5, the Israelis attacked Egypt successfully and Americans in the entire Arab world were at risk because of our government's perceived identification with Israel.

Q: This was the 1967 war.

BOGARDUS: That's right. Almost at once, our two code clerks were swamped. Before this we had only three or four cipher telegrams in a week, and went to thirty a week. Then we went up to twenty or twenty five or thirty a day for about ten days. They were swamped with flash messages, which means instantly, highly classified telegrams, secret and top secret, owing to our proximity to headquarters USAFE and our responsibility for emergency plans. Posts ranging from Rabat to Algiers, Cairo, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Dhahran and Basra were urgently asking for instructions and pleading for evacuation. Since we have no secure means to communicate with Patch, Consul General Lancaster and I had to direct courier trips by car for ten days. Under such pressure, we occasionally did something that made the code cipher a little risky, talking on the phone, for about ten days. It took six or seven days for the White House and the Pentagon to decide how to meet the situation. Thereafter, they did act magnificently and carried out the largest evacuation of Americans ever: some 35,000, which was more than from Korea in 1950. The Consulate General was able to render significant assistance in the planning and coordination of operations. In addition to the courier deliveries, from June 6th to probably the eleventh, I attended the eight o'clock briefings of General Birchinal, together with the generals and admirals. On the morning of the ninth, the general politely suggested that things truly military were to be discussed. I, the only civilian, left. During that day, the world learned of the perfidious Israeli assault on the slightly armed U.S.S. Liberty flying the largest stars and stripes the day before, later determined to be two and a half hours of bombing, strafing and torpedoing. The military didn't know the exact situation at that

point. The Israelis failed to sink the ship, but killed 34 U.S. Navy and wounded 171, for a total of 205 casualties. This is what really got me. I clearly recall, it must have been on the morning of the 10th or the 11th while we were waiting for General Birchinal to appear that his aide, a major, said, “You know what happened the other night? At 3 a.m., we got a flash message from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which had been sent before the Liberty attack and had been delayed. (That came out later.) It said, “Take precautions against enemy action. In other words, if Pearl Harbor happens, it's not our, the Joint Chiefs', fault.” General Birchinal thought a bit and answered, “Who, repeat, who are the enemy?” The joint Chiefs did not answer that for about 30 hours. Another Pearl Harbor had happened.

Q: The Liberty is, of course, a blot on our...

BOGARDUS: A few years later, I joined the U.S.S. Liberty Association as a volunteer. They accepted me and I kept it up. They had a convention.

Q: I want to catch it at the time, not to follow through on the Liberty when you were not on duty. What was the reaction of the military at the Air Force headquarters after it became known that the attack on the Liberty had happened?

BOGARDUS: I got there in September. I was really shocked when, about the middle of September, one of the first things that I saw was an announcement that 31 Israeli military pilots had arrived at McDill Air Force base in Tampa for advanced training at our expense. That's like training the Japanese to be kamikaze against us. That's what was coming down to us from above, from Secretary McNamara.

Q: Your job in Stuttgart was what, deputy chief of the consulate?

BOGARDUS: Yes. All together, I was temporarily in charge for over a year— several months at a time and so forth. But I was never given any real recognition for it.

Q: Where did you go after Stuttgart?

BOGARDUS: I went back to the Air Staff. I was a political advisor to Air Staff, AFPP (Policy and Planning).

Q: You were there from when to when?

BOGARDUS: September of '67 to January of '70, and at ISA for a few months.

Q: Where were you located? In the Pentagon?

BOGARDUS: Yes, with a number of other Air Force officers. I was replacing a colonel. There were about 16 of us, you know.

Q: What were your main concerns doing that?

BOGARDUS: Anything to do with Asia, practically—all the way from the Middle East to Okinawa and Guam and the trust territories of the Pacific Ocean.

Q: How about Vietnam?

BOGARDUS: Oh, sure. When the Tet Offensive occurred, they were very keen to talk with me about the exact situation, where things were and so forth within Saigon because our installations were being attacked. Saigon is where we also became very close with the William E. Colby family. There were two coups d'etat attempted while we were there. During the first one, they took refuge with us.

Q: That was earlier, wasn't it?

BOGARDUS: Earlier than what?

Q: I'm just trying to keep this somewhat chronological. We've already talked about Vietnam.

BOGARDUS: We arrived in Vietnam in January of 1959. We stayed there with home leave interruption until July of '63.

Q: Have we talked about Vietnam?

BOGARDUS: No, we have not.

Q: Why don't we start with Vietnam then? Somehow, we've jumped up to '67 and I want to get back.

BOGARDUS: I do want to just make another point about service in Stuttgart. We had been there in Vietnam when we were not allowed to have more than 863 individual military personnel conducting training. It gradually went up. Finally, they had changed to General Harkins with a big command—MACV it was. That changed everything. We Americans in Vietnam were front paged. With that background, having been there for four and a half years with the embassy, even though my work there was almost all with the USOM (in other words, economic development), I had a lot of local knowledge of people and events and the way things went there. I felt in Stuttgart that, in response to the embassy and the USIA, I should give lectures before university students in Germany on behalf of justifying our cause in Vietnam. I did it, both in Stuttgart Institute of Technology, and at the University of Freiburg, the University of T#bingen, the University of Heidelberg, the University of Bremen, the University of Hamburg, and a couple of weekend seminars with supposed leaders of public opinion. It wasn't very easy to do that auf Deutsche. Fortunately, the German students were not very pugnacious.

Q: The earlier era, yes.

BOGARDUS: Remember, the American military forces were defending Germany at that point. When they asked, “Why did you go in there?” “Well, we were invited in.” But the ones who did cause trouble were the Greek students and the Iranis and the Turks who were studying in the German universities at that point. They were really pugnacious. But

I was able to tell them what was true. They nearly all were Marxists, thought of economic determinism and so forth, so I'd say, “Well, it wasn't colonial at all.” I remember very well (and this was the truth) Ambassador Nolting came back on a very hot afternoon at the end of a day to a staff meeting in the embassy. He said, “You know, I was sitting there for hours having tea with President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Ngo Diem Nhu and so forth, and arguing and debating and talking. At one point, the brother, Ngo Diem Nhu, turned to me and said, 'You Americans need us more than we need you.'” That really threw these Marxist students because it was the God's truth. It completely refuted any colonialist Marxist ideas.

Q: When did you go to Vietnam?

BOGARDUS: We arrived just before Tet, late in January of '59.

Q: The Tet Offensive was in '68.

BOGARDUS: Yes, the Offensive was, but Tet happens every year.

Q: Excuse me, I'm sorry. When one says “Tet” these days, you always think of THE Tet.

BOGARDUS: I was in Intelligence Research in the Department, which was, from my standpoint, horribly boring. I did everything I could to get out, to get away.

Q: So, you went to Vietnam in '59.

BOGARDUS: About January 15.

Q: And your job was economic?

BOGARDUS: Yes, in the Economic Section there. I was writing weekly reports on the way things were going and then a monthly sum-up. I was number two in that section. There were seven of us, including two secretaries. We of the Economic Section were of the

Embassy, but most unusually were not only in a building two miles from the Chancery and were subject to the USOM Director, Arthur Gardner, who was also Economic Minister. He headed 175 officers throughout Vietnam and also supervised the activities of contractors for specific jobs, such as construction, training police and civil servants, and normal schools. So we in the Econ Section were just a small part of the whole USOM show. As loyal members of the team, we were eager to signal advances. Yet our job was to report the progress or lack of progress of all phases of economic development, and Mr. Gardner had signing authority. So, from time to time there was a distinct conflict of interest as to his own and the Embassy's report card.

Q: While you were there, what was the security situation?

BOGARDUS: It wasn't bad until about September of 1961.

Q: Then what happened?

BOGARDUS: We had to retrench. We couldn't go out of town. In the meantime, we had made one trip as far as Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, by car. It wasn't too difficult in January 1960. You just had to be sure that your car was in very good condition and drive it. We got back and later on, we were able to go into the highlands, Banmethuot and up to Nha Trang and Dalat and along the coast there, Da Nang and Hue (pron. whey) and that sort of thing. But it gradually became extremely dangerous. We were sort of circumscribed in staying in greater Saigon.

Q: What about the problems in the programs there, of corruption? Was this a difficult time?

BOGARDUS: Oh, yes, sure. But the main thing was that they badly needed a land reform. The records were not there for land use title, land ownership. There were squatters nearly everywhere because of the war against the French for so long.

Q: The ambassador then was, what, Nolting first?

BOGARDUS: No, it was Elbridge Durbrow, affectionately called “Durby”.

Q: How did you find him?

BOGARDUS: He was a workaholic and never stopped. He thought it was just great to have everybody come over there at his house on our day of rest to keep the embassy together. There were a lot of us in the fairly large embassy, you know. He was very congenial. I eventually got into negotiating PL 480 treaties or agreements and had to associate with him on that, mainly with Arthur Gardner and so forth. Elbridge Durbrow left in '61 and Ambassador Frederick “Fritz” Nolting came from Paris in the beginning of May of '61. I had just ended my home leave at that point. My wife stayed on, didn't come back to post until July or something of that sort. But Nolting was there with Bill Trueheart, who was his DCM. They had been together in Paris.

The first attack by rebels, the first coup d'etat, had taken place in late November, I think, of '59. The airplanes came over and really frightened the daylights out of us. There was a second one later on, in which we lived not too far from the palace. The first one was when the Colby family took refuge with us. Then the second one was 13 months later, early 1961. On that occasion, there was a real battle on our street for an hour. Fortunately, they were fighting each other along the street and we were 100 feet back to the side.

Q: We're talking about not the communists, but within the Vietnam army and the rebels against the president.

BOGARDUS: That's right, yes. Mainly, it was the southerners against all the northerners that had been brought in into high places. To a certain extent, it was also a religious rebellion of the Buddhists against the Catholics. Mrs. Nhu, Madame Nhu, when she married her husband, Nhu, (Diem's brother), converted to Catholicism from Buddhism, but the rest of her family remained Buddhist. Her father became ambassador here in Washington, as you recall. I notice you were there a bit later.

Q: In '69, yes. From what I understand, there was a certain disagreement between these two friends, Nolting and Trueheart, over how we should proceed in Vietnam.

BOGARDUS: That only came out when Fritz Nolting went on vacation, home leave in July 1963, which he spent in the Greek Aegean islands. I had been passing on to Bill Trueheart inside information from one of the prominent Buddhists, who was Truong Dinh Dzu. I was able to safely play golf with Truong Dinh Dzu without any danger of being overheard on the golf course. He was a most interesting man, Truong Dinh Dzu. He had been a boy scout and then he went to University of Hanoi. When we knew him, he was a very successful attorney, able to plead in Vietnamese, French, and English. He had also been a governor of Rotary for Southeast Asia. I did an extensive confidential biographic data report on him with lots of things, including the fact that he had been told by an astrologer down in the Mekong Basin that, one day, he would have a very high post. Eventually, that's what encouraged him later on, after Diem was gone and the other military regime, to run for president in 1965, I think.

Q: Something like that. I'm not sure exactly.

BOGARDUS: He was passing this information to me about what was going on in Hue, for example. The visits from Buddhist emissaries from abroad and the frustrating results, and their not getting anywhere with the regime. I would pass this information, send it down to Bill Trueheart, who was DCM, head of the Political Section. Also, I did a biographic report on Madame Nhu, a lot of information about how she had—There was another sister who was married to a Franco-Vietnamese big game hunter. This was the inside story of these people running away and troubles within the Ngo family over this sort of thing. You remember, Madame Nhu was so powerful that in 1958, she forced the passage of a law that all kinds of gambling, including card games, were absolutely illegal and felonies and that no divorces were possible unless the president approved it (reaction to her sister's elopement).

Q: Later, she tried to have a law against dancing, too.

BOGARDUS: Yes, I know! A number of us Americans and Chinese and Vietnamese families introduced the twist as a bootleg thing and had bootleg dancing parties, where they would send the servants out on the street to give warning if any police were likely to come nearby. A bit of comic relief there.

Q: Did you feel constrained in your reporting, the difference between, say, when Nolting was there, as opposed to Trueheart, and what you could talk about?

BOGARDUS: When that rift occurred, we were just leaving ourselves. We left on July 14 of '63. The real dust up didn't occur until the end of the month. Senator Cabot Lodge arrived late in August, as I recall. We saw the Truehearts a year later here in 1967 or '68. We didn't go into it too much, but he said that he was no longer a hawk.

Where I did feel constrained was, particularly under Arthur Gardner, that we had to report an overly optimistic picture. In '61, I opted to stay on. I had had the choice of three years without home leave or two years, home leave and back. Joe Rosza, who was head of the Section, was leaving, probably retiring. I opted to stay under Arthur Gardner, meaning that I would have home leave, and come back for May. But my relations with Arthur Gardner, unfortunately, became more and more unpleasant. Towards the end, in September of '62, we had an inspection by Wilson Flake, who was a retired ambassador. He was out to get Arthur Gardner. As it turned out, he felt it was necessary to lambaste me, too, in order to do this. Wilson Flake, it turned out, fervently believed that it wasn't necessary to learn any foreign languages—let them all speak English with you. I had seated him beside the Vietnamese Minister of Commerce, Thanh, who spoke pretty good English. But those officials were very few and far between. We Americans dealt with all the other Vietnamese officials in French, Flake didn't bother. So, he had very little—Then he criticized my reporting as being far too long and not necessary—cut things back and so forth. He gave me a black eye and it hurt my career.

Q: Where did you go when you left there?

BOGARDUS: We went to Stuttgart.

Q: Oh, that's right, you went to Stuttgart. After Stuttgart, where?

BOGARDUS: To Air Staff.

Q: And then from Air Staff to-?

BOGARDUS: I was just waiting around in the Department, looking for a decent job. Nobody called me and I didn't have any connections really. When it came time that they said, “Well, you can retire under favorable circumstances,” I did. I just am terribly sorry that I had not planned where I was going before I retired. I should have gotten something really solid before I did that. My wife became an interior designer anyway. I helped her on that and still have ever since, but I was selling real estate for about four years.

Q: Back to Vietnam, when you left Vietnam, all hell was going to break loose in October and November of '63. But you left in July of '63.

BOGARDUS: When things went bad, we were in Stuttgart.

Q: What was your feeling and can you say about the other officers in the embassy about Diem and the regime about the time you left in mid-'63?

BOGARDUS: We thought that Diem and Nhu, something had to be done about them, most of us. Fritz Nolting had very clear instructions to be the nicest, sweetest, most seductive, persuasive ambassador who was a philosopher and a devout Episcopalian, which is very close to Catholicism, and so forth. He was trying and sincerely thought he could persuade them, I'm sure. Then he was really angry afterwards when Bill Trueheart reported, “Things have really gone too far. We can't continue.” John F. Kennedy finally agreed with him. The

way I read it, they never said we were going to shoot Diem and Nhu, but we did say, “Well, if you guys want to push him out of the way, you generals, it's okay. We won't stop you.”

I met the CIA agent who carried the message to the Vietnamese generals. I'm trying to think of his name. He was an American officer, major or lieutenant colonel, of Belgian origin. It's a matter of historical record. I met him later at the Colby house on Bill Colby's birthday January 2, either 1968 or 1969. That is the way that happened. I didn't have anything to do with the falling out of Nolting and Trueheart, but I feel sure that afterward Fritz Nolting could see how the change in policy came in his absence, and insisted that he could have succeeded in his mission, and so on. He thought that, probably, until his dying days. He died two years ago in Charlottesville. Maybe this is a good point to...

Q: This might be a good point to stop, I think.

BOGARDUS: Yes. I'll tell you this though, just lately, I've finally read a book called Approaching Vietnam. If you haven't read it, I recommend it to you. I have it at home. I forget the author's name. What it does detail is from 1946 to 1954, Dien Bien Phu, over and over again we were placating the French government one crisis after another, about Vietnam and rebuffing Uncle Ho.

Q: Ho Chi Minh, yes.

BOGARDUS: Ho Chi Minh. We did rebuff him several times. All that was hidden from us at the time and until contrarily much later. If I had known that sort of thing, I don't think I could have been so eager and sure of the righteousness of the cause. Even now, it's very painful. I used to debate with our daughters, teenage and so forth. Oh, boy!Addendum

Pertinent to the following is the fact that I and the CIA officers William Colby, who later became DCI of the CIA, and George Carver, became acquainted in 1959 to '62, when we were all with the American embassy in Saigon. Apparently, there was an Israeli mole near the top of the CIA in 1973. George Carver, who died last July, 1993, continued as a very

close associate of Colby when they left Vietnam. Colby, as you recall, rose to be Director of Central Intelligence.

Now that Carver is dead, I've concluded that it is my patriotic duty to make known what he told me some time ago. That was December near Christmastime, 1992, at the Sulgrave Club, a birthday party for Barbara Colby. In November, 1973, just after our nuclear war crisis with the Kremlin over Israel and Egypt, Colby asked George to prepare an analysis of how such a horrific crisis developed. George reviewed all the intelligence and diplomatic traffic, he told me, and delivered the analysis to Colby, who authorized “on a close-hold basis only” its transmission for comment within the Agency. Within 48 hours and before all the expected comment arrived, the Israeli Intelligence Office in Washington returned a copy of the analysis with comment on many paragraphs: “correct,” “wrong,” or “not exactly right,” etc. In speaking to me, Carver was enraged over the infiltration and especially the brazen taunting of the Agency, a possible attempt at intimidation.

The above is in no sense a reproach of Bill Colby, whom I last spoke with at Carver's funeral. I conjecture that the Israeli act might have been an intimation that they held a trump over the Agency. Later on, another expert (Jewish) intimated to me that it was probably the result of Henry Kissinger or Eagleburger's work in leaking that information.

End of interview